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RAIN CITY

BASEBALL—EVERYTHING'S GOLDEN—RAIN IN THE FORECAST—AT THE END OF WIRE

Jelly threw a wad of gum at the pitcher, but it curved downward and hit a spectator behind the dugout. The crowd roared like a seashell. Jelly pressed the balls of his feet in circles on the concrete while Helen played with his zipper. Wind blew foam off their beer.

At the crack of the bat, the crowd rose to its feet. Home run for the Oilers. It was a close game and the announcer was moving through the excitement: "Fourth . . . in a double header . . . he sure can. . . ." The crowd was subsiding as Jelly became lost in the commentary and its self perpetuation. Helen sipped her beer. A man in a green suit, a man not named Jonathin, yelled *Watch the game, Watch the game*. People were edging down the row of knees to get closer to the field. The announcer was in mid-commercial: "When cars at the wrong moment . . . try non-action . . . lightener, ungreasy . . . yessiree, I say . . . as you can . . . as your car . . . can I. . . ."

The crowd roared.

"Helen, when is Bottoms getting here?"

"I'm not sure exactly. He just gave me a note after class that said to wait until the fourth inning, and then start looking."

"One more inning to go." The announcer made the same statement. "Base on balls." Jelly was trying to anticipate the loud speaker's next sounds.

"Goddamn beer." He sloshed the beer around in the cup, spilling it over the rim. Helen liked the way it foamed as it hit the concrete and began to spill droplets from her own cup. She flicked the hair out of her eyes and spilled half of the remaining beer.

A loud snapping sound from the field made the crowd stand. The announcer was breathless. Jelly watched as the ball came towards them, seeing it arc several rows behind where they were sitting. He turned to see a man in a yellow suit and a blue-flecked green tie standing ready for the catch. As the ball whizzed near, Jelly sailed the remaining beer at the man, hitting him just before the ball smashed into his teeth. The man tried to scream as blood and teeth sprayed over people in the two rows below.

Helen finished pouring the beer as the crowd roared. Jelly looked for the bubble gun funny that had fallen from his hand during the movement.

"Let's go Jelly."

She elbowed him in the small of the back as he was leaning over looking for the wrapper. The injured man had passed out backwards into the fourth-inning trash. A beer vendor named Valden had beaten the police to the area and was rifling the man's pockets for cash and valuables. The crowd cheered as he held up a twenty dollar bill, pulled from the yellow breast pocket. "Hey kid. Valden. Half that's mine," Jelly yelled when he saw the twenty fluttering in Val's hand above the crowd. He reached but got the strap of the beer case instead, pulling the beers and cups over the seats and the man between the aisles.

"Goddamn kid. Jelly let's go!"

Valden was already two rows up, dragging the beer case by its broken strap. Helen's hair was blowing.

The police were pressing through the crowd near the end of the aisle, while the announcer was trying to call out the play by play on the action in the stands.

Helen's hair was blowing golden in the sun. Badges sparkled on the policemen like bits of new broken glass on sand.

Jelly fished for more gum inside Helen's purse. Read the fortunes. "Good fortunes. Everything has to be golden. All in one day."

The crowd was wild: bleats and cheers from the stands and on the field. Cracking bats and arguments filled the announcer's monologue.

"Let's go to the beach. Fuck Bottoms. He won't show anyway." But Helen was pulling him down the aisle rather than to the exit archway. The police were assembling the prostrate man onto a stretcher. Someone had filled his mouth with the blue-flecked tie. Jelly looked to the field: "Everything's Golden," and then into the loud speaker as the announcer ended his commercial on aging: "Paid for by the friends of geriatrics. . . ." Jelly grabbed Helen by the arms and pointed her into the loud speaker: "Helen, say a few words to the man at the end of the wire." She repeated: "Everything's Golden."

Wind blew around the stadium, billowing loose hats and coats.

Bottoms appeared from behind as the announcer was giving the weather conditions. The loud speaker crackled: "By the top of the eighth: RAIN! Rain! Rain!: the barometer is falling, 29.9. The wind is steady. . . ." Jelly started laughing. "I want more beer."

"I think now's the time, Jelly."

". . . tomorrow's forecast: MORE RAIN: four inches. . . ."

"Yes. Now is the time." Bottoms put his hands into his coat pockets and stared into the sky above the stadium. The lights were being turned on.

Jelly folded all of the day's fortunes into a neat bundle and placed them into his hip pocket.

Bottoms looked as if he were about to speak.

THE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE—THE
ALMANAC AS PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE—THE
DINNER BEGINS—NUMBNESS IS A VIRTUE

Sylvia Bottoms, born January 1, 1950, to Professor Jonathin and Sylvia Patent Bottoms, propels her wheel chair from the kitchen to her father's bedroom. On her lap is the tray of *animal's breakfast*, the term her father uses, of one six-minute egg, boiled, and a glass of warm water. On January 2, 1966, Sylvia obtained her driver's license and during the final game of the World Series that year, she lost control of her Porche. While on the freeway, she was trying to bounce the speedometer back and forth, watching it arc from one side to the other, and the white lines blur into a single thin line. As she moved to flick hair out of her eyes, she hit a cardboard box, flattening it into a plane and shattering the windshield: at 140 mph gliding over the median through the rails and reflector poles into oncoming traffic. By the final day of exhibition games of the new season she was occupying the chair that she now rolls into the dining room. She watches the last of the lime green kitchen reflected in the water glass melt into the blue sky of the dining room. The noon-lighting distracts her from guiding with her left hand, causing the chair to veer right, into the wall of English ivy. Balancing the tray on her lap against her knees, she jerks the strands of ivy out of the spokes, and begins to finger the *NEW WORLD ALMANAC FOR THE RELOCATED AND DISENFRANCHISED* beneath the seat with her free hand.

"Damn the mornings." She resumes straight movement. The leather cracks beneath her seat and again she fingers the *Almanac* in its pocket under her, checking off mentally the vital statistics of her mobile contamination:

One of 5,625,244 drivers (1966) on page 30; no; page 134 and one of 170,000 permanently impaired by a motor vehicle (1966) which is maybe on seventy-three; for sure on 74. For sure also, she had not aided the three percent drop on page 134, in bodily injury claims per 1000 property damage claims (1966).

Yes; on page 134. There are no figures for automobile quarantining, but at times she has looked up the final statistic for her mother who had died during child birth, at which time Sylvia I had become Sylvia II, and another set of statistics began. The possibility that other data pertinent to her state exists in the *Almanac* is good. She periodically checks the manifold items, from the state populations to attendance records at baseball games. She has not been to a game since the accident, but she is considering the possibility. It would be recorded in the next year's *Almanac* and probably with it some trace of the three radios that her father has bought within the last week. However, the *Owned Radios by Household* category seems less vital. Sylvia considers her known figures.

The light in the dining room fades into the hallway as the light faded the October day of her accident. Sylvia brakes the wheel chair instinctively, holding the tray stationary. The water pools to the center of the glass, breaking into dark green streaks from the hall ceiling. The greased wheels begin to move silently through the hall toward the bedroom door. She does not announce her arrival, since she rarely speaks to him anyway, believing him to be the cause of her wheel chaired position, but she cannot find any *Almanac* statistics under *Accidental Causation by Indirect Action* or *Fathers in League with Doctors and Physicians*. There are no such figures.

In high school she was the class beauty. Her model's figure, particularly her casual way of loaning it for evenings to well placed tongues, earned her immense popularity. Until the accident. The freeway catastrophe not only ruined her sex life, but allowed for the decay of her body so that now she could not enjoy sex even if the possibility occurred. Her legs have withered and her arms and trunk have become too muscular. The wheel chair motions have created hard bulbous tissue that heaves as she wheels throughout the house, in total service to her father. She is the chair's mechanic, studies its movements in mirrors. In between, she masturbates.

Sylvia begins the hand movements to turn into her father's room, hoping to find him still dressing, as she does every morning. She estimates the time for preparation and delivery of the prescribed breakfast at exactly one minute and forty-five seconds before it is expected. She has never been late, and is continually rewarded with his nakedness as he pulls on his shorts.

But as she turns the corner into his room, with erect nipples and thoughts of speed, she finds him completely dressed. *Jonathin*. Her arms fall limply over the wheel guides.

"You're one minute early again. Not bad. Not bad."

She looks at her watch to determine where she has lost forty-five seconds. He stares down into the rug, following the patterns in the border to her chair, then upwards along her legs. He does not look into her face, but at her hands hanging over the wheels. "Maybe I should buy you a new chair. A motorized one would be more efficient. Free the arms." He follows the arms back to the carpet to his own feet. "Yes."

No. Too much noise. A stupid hum. She nods her head yes.

He begins lecturing as if she were the class: "In an internal combustion engine a fuel-air mixture is burned so that the gaseous products exert . . ."

It seems to her that she has heard this lecture before, but she is not sure.

" . . . a force on moving parts of the machine . . . it is an exothermic reaction. When applied to an automobile, the mechanical result is the breaking of inertia, resulting in a loss of energy . . ." He hesitates for a moment, looking into her eyes, her widely spaced, dark and receding

eyes with eyebrows that are like shadows locked together above her nose. The whites are glowing. "... an energy based upon passed replications of remote mechanisms destined for momentum ..."

Sylvia sits placidly, easing her muscles into the chair, conforming to its shape like water easing into the soil of a potted plant. She decides that the lecture is fresh.

She stares at his zipper. He is the inefficient machine that made her body hard from the waist up and soft and weak from the waist down, wheeling around in a leather seat; a body exhausting itself.

She nods yes again.

"... a linear vectorial equation that approximates nature's three dimensional manufacture of chlorophyl."

Yes.

"I must be late. Yes. I am late. The game must have already started. I have to be there; to make the freeway in four minutes; to be there within the hour."

During his flurry of activity, she backs from the room into the hall, moving off beneath the noise of his movements.

Bottoms smells her shampoo and body scents as he files through the closet for a raincoat. "Rain today. Rain tomorrow." He thinks of Sylvia at the end of the hall. "There will be two more for dinner tonight, Sylvia."

She turns the corner into the study, taking a different route back to the kitchen. She hears him again: "There will be four in all for dinner. Two more."

In the kitchen she pulls the *Almanac* from beneath the chair. She begins to read: *Internal combustion engines are in a continual process of transformation from euthenical models to eutrophy; movement is euthanasia.*

TRAVEL IS DECISIVE—FREEWAYS—DINNER IS PROPOSED—RAIN'S THE ?—WATER

Professor Bottoms had been watching the havoc created by Jelly and Helen. He knew that Helen was unable to initiate the level of confusion with which Jelly could fill the air. She was an apt follower, and somehow with her smooth and low voice, made Jelly a catalyst, causing the reactions, the electromagnetic disturbances emitted from the spectators. The sweat, the rain, the cracking of the loud speaker, and

the erratic voices from the announcer, were familiar; perhaps from his theories on the subject, unofficially published, "The Chaos of Technology?/ Man vs. the Plant Kingdom," although his students were unaware of the publication of the notes on the green chalkboard. He had been checking his watch continually for the last five minutes and at least five times every thirty minutes during the last hour, looking down, calculating, then looking back up. It was like his daughter's rhythmical wheeling movements, like rowing, but he was rowing in time; and like his daughter, he was early. After nestling beneath the archway out of the crowd traffic, he had spent the extra time deciding where he had gained five minutes. Conclusion: the freeway was less congested than on his previous trips to meet Helen and Jelly; why did he place her name before his? Jelly was the force, the active ingredient, who had arrived later, who had actually found Helen, even though she was in *his* class. She was the prototype student: obedient, consummate note-taker; in general, lifeless. She would sit in the middle rows; her clothes always neat, her blonde hair pulled back and tied with a ribbon of matching or complimentary color to the shade of whatever dress/sweater combination she was wearing, giving the overall appearance of being from an upper income family, in school out of boredom rather than to learn. She was a perfect B-plus student until she met or, he thought, was found by Jelly; and then she became a C-minus student, alive and functioning, with A-plus ideas. Maybe it was Jelly who introduced her to sex, to any action in excess of the norms. Bottoms thought that Jelly could introduce anyone to anything new, and the conversion would be complete. And Jelly himself, whose background was a mystery purposely created by his own contradictory admissions, and whose clothes and behavior were too erratic to pattern, seemed to fit a textbook case of some psychological type that Bottoms was unable to remember. But Jelly possessed great quantities of various types of energy: he seemed to create and destruct himself from minute to minute. Jelly's fascination was simple: he was himself to disappear in one bright, flashing, entropic reaction; and when it happened, like a dying star, Bottoms wanted to be there to record data on the nearby humanity, a crowd, hopefully a very large crowd that would itself explode, beginning the second deluge; proving that the environment finally could not cope with mankind, and through the initial reaction to Jelly, it would fold back upon itself, into rain, pure simple, chemically laden rain. A perfect eutropic world would begin again; a new universe fashioned around plant life, destined only for plant life, so dense and perfect that it would choke out all else. The earth would molt its dead skin of animal life, and return to the sea: to itself: to water.

" . . . another front due in early Monday . . . late Sunday night . . ."
The end of the announcer's reading of the forecast brought Bottoms out of the shadows into the aisles of standing spectators. " . . . late

report from the weather bureau: clear Monday afternoon and Tuesday; highs in the upper sixties; low: near forty." Jelly and Helen were scrambling past him as he spoke: "Over here, here." The crowd roared. Jelly stole a drink from a seat at the end of the row as they passed. Helen was trying to pull him through the crowd. Bottoms collided with her as she looked to see what had happened at first base-second base. The play was at home.

"Fourth Inning." And as Helen spoke, Jelly reeled around to see the man searching for his drink.

"Right. Fourth inning. The freeway was less congested than normal. Shall we go? I overtook my schedule near the entrance gate." Jelly nodded agreement, but made no effort to move from the aisle. Instead, he watched the man accuse the woman across from him of stealing his beer while he lit a cigarette. The woman was upset and began throwing pencils, paper, combs, and other items from her purse. "Got to hurry. Beat the crowds."

"Right Professor. Hurry." Jelly was bored with the fight and began to play with the seam on the back of Helen's skirt.

It was raining when they left the stadium archway, as they headed for the parking lot beyond the maze of white lines.

The freeway was crowded. Professor Bottoms was hunched over the wheel, moving his head right and left, trying to see out of the rear view mirror and the windshield simultaneously. He was having problems focusing his eyes quickly enough to accompany his rapid head movements. Helen twisted the radio tuner dial back and forth, pausing across the dial for bits and pieces of songs and conversation. She looked into the backseat at the vendor Jelly had bought at the stadium gate for twenty dollars and loose change: "You like country music? or maybe rock and roll?"

The old vendor was cowed beneath the arm rest, trying to lose himself in the vinyl seat.

"It was on a Wednesday night, the moon was shinin' bright, He stopped the Glendale traaaaaainnn . . ." Helen held the dial between stations in the white noise. The vendor began vomiting. Jelly had promised him another five dollars if he would bring his carrying case of beer along with them on the freeway. The vendor had agreed readily, but was now foaming at the mouth like a sick dog, trying to arch the vomit out the window. The beer foamed over the seat due to Bottoms' unpredictable driving habits. Jelly took only one sip from each cup of beer, sometimes tossing full ones out the window, periodically handing one to Helen who would do likewise.

"Professor . . . how long; how much longer?"

"What?" Bottoms was holding his gaze on the rear view mirror looking for Jelly, but saw only the old vendor retching through the

open window. The vomit was streaking across the back of the car.

"How much longer? We have to time the number of beers left."

"Not much. Two forty-five. Two-fifty maybe." The car swerved onto the median, running two wheels over the concrete island, knocking off the hubcaps on the left side of the car, and barely missing a speed limit sign. Bottoms rocked the steering wheel and veered back into the lane, through the noise of horns. Jelly tossed another beer above the car. Bottoms yelled from the front seat: "Gravity Jelly. Gravity." And the beer flew over their car, landing on the windshield of the car directly behind them. "If I had not increased the speed," Bottoms paused to watch the car behind shoot across the median into the oncoming traffic, "the beer would have hit us. It's the gravity. You must remember gravity."

"Good. I've got it."

". . . won't your baby want me tomorrow, won't your baby want me today? If I mess. . . ." Helen kept turning the dial, but the volume was low enough so that the dull hum of the cracked speaker was as loud as the music.

"I want out." The vendor's shaky voice moved from the back window to the front seat, his head dropping from side to side, and then falling forward: "I need to get out."

Jelly handed him another beer and asked his name. Helen said, "What's the speed?" And as she spoke, she found another country song: "Ain't it the trucks and the cars, that makes them what they are; makes lovers think they're new, but it's the wind and the sin of those big old men—that drives them through the blue . . ."

Beneath the radio the vendor spoke again: "Oram."

"97.5 miles per hour."

"Ah. Organ, you say? Professor, here is the latest proof: Organic is his name. Is he part of the plan too?"

"That's too fast . . . you'll get us stopped for sure."

"Part of the plan you say?" and Bottoms stopped his frenetic driving for a moment. He relaxed behind the wheel, easing back into the seat. The rear view mirror was vacant. Space behind the car of maybe six or seven white lines, but there were cars and trucks on both sides. He edged the car into the center lane, into the traffic.

The car was silent. Jelly crawled into one corner with a beer; the vendor was limp in the other corner. Helen left the radio dial alone. The silence pervading the car almost frightened Bottoms—the kind of silence in which violent electromagnetic shock occurs. Vector equations and differentials of solid trajectory formulae massed on the windshield and the instrument panel became a glowing mass of static electricity: St. Elmo's Fire. Broken silence: "St. Elmo's Fire." The speakers vibrated with between-the-stations high pitched whine.

"My God in Heaven, it's raining fire. I'm at the end of the world." The vendor began to vomit blood.

"St. Automobile's Fire," and Jelly tossed a full cup of beer over the Professor's shoulder onto the glowing instruments. Helen tried to turn off the radio, but could not reach it in time. The car started braking itself, the tail lights flashing. Cars behind were alive with brakelights, and the whole freeway became a parameter of red and yellow flashes in the early darkness.

"... sometimes the body takes a journey, sometimes it hides in the ..."

"We all shall have dinner. Sylvia is expecting two more. One more will make no difference. Will be no problem. Right." Helen sang as Bottoms finished the dinner plans.

"Good. Three more for dinner." Bottoms thought about the afternoon's events and decided that they were good. Also, Sylvia will have to get used to car travel again, and freeways, and will have to go to the games. They would be there in twenty-three minutes; twenty-five minutes at most. A two minute tolerance. Adequate.

Jelly threw another beer at a passing sign in the opposite lane. It hit a median sign: SPEED LIMIT 65.

Professor Jonathin H. Bottoms was nearly fifty, and having had more than his share of illness, looked closer to sixty-five. The bald head, shiny in any light, contrasted to his bushy eyebrows that curved up at the ends. The wrinkles on his brow resembled seagulls drawn by children, row after row, the wings touching and converging finally upon the grayed tufts above his eyes that are large and deep-set like his daughter's. A strange condition in his pupils made them dilate and constrict randomly regardless of the light level; often as many as four times a second.

He walked in short choppy steps due to a low center of gravity, always looking as if he were about to fall or to crawl into a car, shoulders hunched together and his coat riding up on his back. The rest of his clothes were tailored to his shortened body. He was not what would be called the professorial type, rather he gave the appearance of an executive who had journeyed through the ranks the hard way: through shrewdness and thrift, with a wise application of power. But the image was manufactured. He was unable to obtain even the smallest of grants. Being relegated to minor departmental status, he taught only the dank classes at the lower division mixture of majors: mostly Elementary Microbiochemistry 2564. As a teacher he was defensive. He never heard the right questions and gave mediocre lectures. By the second week of classes, his subjects died on the blackboard, by the third week his students had resold their texts to the exchange. What students remained after the sixth week often went to an empty classroom, as Jonathin forgot the class existed. Instead, he was happily at the baseball game, waiting for the rain and watching Helen and Jelly fondle each other in the crowds.

Helen discovered early that the students in his classes invariably received high grades, so that when she tried to seduce him, it was out of boredom rather than education. Not only did he misunderstand her attempts, but he took the action as a request for a makeup exam, which she threw away after leaving the room. At the next class period, she was complimented for her brilliant performance and became the standard for his grading on future tests, as well as a close friend and ally in the implementation of his plans. The course in Herbs and Mosses was a failure instigated by the physiology department, and while she and Jelly sat in the back of the room drinking wine, the class dwindled to five students who had to have the class to graduate. Bottoms considered the class an immense success in determining the seasons and checking the wind by moss scrutiny, and used it to modify his conclusions on the implications of his theories. During the term, his notes on the green chalkboard became shorthand which he photographed at the end of each class day for future publication.

Bottoms folded his brow, raised his eyelids, and descended into grass. The vendor opened his door slowly, trying to pull his legs out with both hands. Helen was still twisting the radio dial. She watched Oram collapse outside the door. He stayed on the grass trying to figure out why he had taken the extra case of beer at the beginning of the third inning. Until then it has been a pretty good day for selling cokes, but the rain had ruined the thirsts so he had switched to beer to make more money per sale. And when the kid had offered to buy the whole case for twenty dollars, plus five more for riding, he decided that the day was going to be one of his best. At this thought he rolled over and began vomiting more of his stomach lining.

"Where are we?" He tried to speak between heaves.

"You should not question the word of a twenty dollar bill." Jelly was walking towards the garage door.

"Oram Watkins," Helen was using a southern accent, "to go home is no problem; to get up is the reason for the ride." She turned up the volume of the radio. The white noise drifted across the lawn, drowning out the rest of her voice and the noise of Jelly slicing the garden hose into sections at the garage door. Oram was trying to decide if he should say that his last name is not Watkins. Helen switched the radio off.

"You probably think we are going to kill you, don't you Organ?"

"He does."

"Bile sure builds up in old people," Jelly said. Helen pulled off the radio nobs and took the key from the ignition.

"Come." Bottoms was shouting from the front door.

"Come. Mr. Watkins. Jelly help Mr. Watkins."

Oram held his hands near his throat; saliva and mucus ran from his nose onto the grass. The wind blew clouds across the sky like a time

lapse film.

"Do you have a license, Orpham?"

"Watch the wind." Bottoms stepped inside the front door and yelled for Sylvia.

THE HUMANE MEETS THE ORGANIC—DINNER IS PROPOSED AGAIN—TABLE LECTURE

There was an immediate reaction between Sylvia and Helen, a type of acid into water affair: the dream of what was into the reality of the present. Sylvia fell in love with Helen. The sight of Helen's blonde hair pulled back, the green ribbon dangling over the forest green sweater, and her muscular breasts made goose flesh over Sylvia's entire body, even her legs that had been dead for years tingled. She placed her hands on the chrome wheel guides and began masturbating the chair back and forth. Helen smiled politely as she stuck both hands into Jelly's pockets. Wheeling silently behind, Sylvia undressed Helen, walking her eyes over the soft white flesh and thin pubic hair, her own body rigid in the chair, each of the muscles in her chest tightening, then relaxing her hands over the chrome. The decision to take off her clothes was a spontaneous reaction to Helen's body, hoping that she too would undo the soft flesh. The *Almanac* fell to the floor.

"Sylvia. The dinner should be ready. It's time to set another place. Mr. Watkins is joining us."

"Mr. Watkins?"

"Yes. Oram Watkins, a new reaction in the equation. He knows physics: he is a beer-selling Kepler. Hurry. It's time."

Sylvia took her eyes off Helen, reversed direction with her arms to see Watkins puking through the front door. He was pale and sweaty. The sight repulsed her. She reeled back around to see Jelly cupping both of Helen's breasts. Sylvia ripped off her blouse, exposing the granite like flesh, the mica-flecked nipples.

At the table Bottoms began to lecture, speaking through bites of hot dog: "The history of man has been a continual struggle between static-technological man and the kinetic plant kingdom; men respond to chance and chaos created by nature and the order of the green. Imagine our primitive ancestors gathering everything by hand. As such, they *are* forced to follow the game that is easiest to kill, while the gathering half of the group follow seasonal vegetation. There is a split: the game goes one way, the season the other. The shaman is called in to decide the

course of action. As a wise man, he recognizes the dilemma, and avoiding death, chooses to remain stationary and cultivate . . ."

Oram was consuming more and more wine. He left the hot dogs with cheese-on-a-toothpick sails floating in a sea of catsup. Pieces of sausage lined his plate.

He poured more wine and watched Sylvia's breasts fill with blood while she chewed.

". . . the once gathered vegetation. He dies and feeds the plants. Success. The domestication of nature to the agrarian routine; the hunters are forced to become nomadic, and suicide replaces the hunting class of gatherers, making weapons static and cultivation kinetic: women kinetic; men static; the friction between becomes the humanoid-plant dialectic . . ."

Jelly watches the folds in Bottom's face congeal and his hands dip into his pockets. "Helen, let's go."

"No. Wait. Wait a while longer."

Jelly looked again at Bottoms: "Where's the wind, Jonathin?"

Bottoms' speech rolled onto his plate, becoming a dull hum like the radio speaker in the car, fragments of speech directed toward Helen: ". . . was the license to . . . for plantat . . . for plankton to commit suicide . . . destroy animal fat . . . into. . . ."

Jelly swallowed two more double bubbles with his wine. The fortunes were favorable, and he tried to tell Bottoms of the impending success, but was not able to break the hum of his voice. Helen removed her green kneesocks without using her hands. This action made Sylvia pee her wheel chair as she served desert, leaving tracks throughout the dining room and kitchen. To Jelly the tracks were works of art and he questioned Helen about the possibility of returning to art school for an art degree in water painting on land and wood. Before she could answer, Oram fell over the edge of the table as he tried to bite Sylvia's nipples.

"Jonathin, where's the wind?"

The seagulls on Bottoms' forehead were in flight as he began to hum louder than the conversation. New sails were issued all around and the sea was calm.

At midnight, Helen pushed Sylvia into the backyard. Both of them were naked. Between Sylvia's heavy breathing and her reflexive action to wheel her own chair, she collapsed backwards her head resting

between Helen's soft white breasts. Oram, Jelly, and Professor Bottoms were atop three of the trees in the yard: Oram was thunder vomiting through the limbs; Bottoms was lightning; and Jelly was rain as he doused wine over the two naked women.

"Jonathin. Are the seasons ready now? Are they ready Jonathin?"

The Oilers lost the second game of the double header that night.

It rained four inches during the game causing several lights to blow and the loud speaker system to short out. The announcer was silent for the last forty-five minutes of the game, while the wind blew.